This is the squatting position which was also used by the Quechua and the Egyptians. [The Mundurucu] bury with the deceased a few objects he had used in life, such as weapons, feather ornaments, etc. My interpreter was an intelligent Indian and spoke, besides his Mundurucu dialect, the Portuguese and Tupi tongues. He would translate without hesitation into Mundurucu the following sentences: "I miss my mother -- Nheben uexi cahi" "I miss my son -- Nhebẽn opute cahi." The word nehbẽn means "to miss." "My soul goes to heaven -- Ubiumbẽ cabi cahi dhẽ."

This knowledge of the heavenly bodies, though still quite rudimentary; these beliefs in a future life, free from odious superstitions; this faculty to conceive and express abstract ideas and the purest and sweetest feelings of the human heart, such as nostalgia for mother or son -- all this surprised me on the part of a people that has always been considered one of the fiercest and most barbarous in the valley of the Amazon.

If the Mundurucu did not derive their beliefs and knowledge from some of the civilized groups on the Andean Plateau, I presume at least that for centuries they must have lived as the inhabitants of the plains villages do today -- that is, in centers as densely populated as [118] a savage economy based on hunting and the meager resources of a crude husbandry will permit. These villages are in constant communication with each other and preserve the same uses and customs. As I mentioned above, the Mundurucu tattoing pattern is really a blood initiation which stamps them with an indelible mark -- a sacred tie binding in brotherly communion all the members of this numerous and powerful tribe.

I will, however, abstain from drawing any conclusions whatever. My purpose is to observe facts with scrupulous care and to describe them with fidelity.

It may be that the light sketch I am tracing of the life of a savage tribe will be pondered by one of those superior minds who cogitate on human destiny and on the problems of mankind.

Theirs is the task to plumb the mysteries of Providence, to search for the beginnings of man's journeys on this earth, for the paths he has followed and the destinies that await him.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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1889, 100; 1895, 50.[18] The remaining fifty had already lost their identity as Mundurucú or as Indians. Hartt likewise reported in 1885 that "the Mundurucú of the Tapajós, below the rapids, are now all civilized and so mixed with the general population that their nationality has in great part been lost."[19]

On the Madeira waters, much the same process ran its course. In 1865, Louis Agassiz, the naturalist, and his wife traveled on the Paraná-Mirím and the lower part of the Maué-Assú River. On the latter stream they found a Mundurucú village consisting of two parallel rows of houses with a Catholic church at one end of an open square.[20] At the time of their visit the population was scattered in the forest where they were working in their gardens and collecting forest products. The full population gathered only three or four times a year for festivals. Only a few Indians spoke Portuguese, according to Mrs. Agassiz,[21] although there were undoubtedly more bilinguals who preferred not to disclose the fact. Most of the people lacked the characteristic Mundurucú tattooing, and all wore clothes. William Chandless, an English explorer who visited the region only a few years later, reported that the Mundurucú "are civilized, and live in families not as in tribal life."[22] They were primarily engaged in the planting of tobacco and the collection of *guaraná*, sarsaparilla, and *copaiba* oil. The movement of people from the savannahs of the Tapajós to the upper Secundurý River was apparently still continuing, for in 1870 Chandless reported "The Indians of the Rio de Canumá, as far as I went, are much like those on the Maué-assú: higher up the tattooed sons

[18] Coudreau, 1897, p. 8.
[19] Hartt, 1885, p. 117.
[20] Agassiz, 1900, p. 308.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 312.
[22] Chandless, 1870, p. 434.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

SOLIDARITY AND FISSION

439 484 574 648 The Mundurucú also take great pleasure in their excursions to the Tapajós River. Although their main business is with their own patron, they often make side trips to other trading posts. During these stays, they attend the *rezas*, or prayer sessions, held by the patron's wife, and usually are welcomed at parties given by Brazilians. They sleep wherever there is room to hang a hammock and spend the days helping the patron or merely watching what little activity there may be. In the evenings, the visiting Mundurucú go to the patron's house, where they are served demitasse coffee. After one or two weeks they go home.

171 648 Since the traders' trips to the Indians are infrequent, and of short duration, these visits to the Tapajós shores constitute one of the principal means of learning the ways of the white men. The Mundurucú are extremely observant and sensitive to cultural differences. When in the houses of the traders, they usually remain silent except for an occasional exchange among themselves; but they watch intently and with interest. They are well aware of the [123] depth of cultural and linguistic differences, and they occasionally subjected me to lengthy, and quite intelligent questioning on the speech and manners of Americans.

191 648 Linguistic differences present a great barrier to cultural interchange. Only a few Brazilians possess any fluency in Mundurucú, and competence in Portuguese is similarly limited among the savannah dwellers. Most of the men speak a few words of Portuguese and understand a somewhat greater number. But their vocabulary is largely limited to simple and common words and phrases and to the names of items of commerce. No extensive direct communication of ideas between Mundurucú and Brazilian takes place.

177 649 This linguistic gulf is partly bridged by those bilingual